

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

REPORT

SUBJECT The Balkan Tourist Organization

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This is UNEVALUATED Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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1. The Balkan Tourist Organization, located at 10 Dobrudzha Street in Sofia, controls all the Balkan Tourist restaurants and the following 12 hotels:
 - a. Hotel Bulgaria at No. 4 Ruski Boulevard, Sofia; this hotel occupies a 6-story building, has suites and rooms, and serves mainly diplomats and high government officials; a suite consisting of an anteroom, a bedroom with one bed and a bathroom costs 35 leva per day; a suite with a bedroom with two beds costs 70-80 leva per day; suites which contain a study in addition to the above cost 100 leva per day; these are located on the first, second, and third floors of the hotel; the hotel has about 40 employees, many of whom are working for the State Security; the administration has spare keys which are used to enter the rooms to search the belongings of the guests when required; there are also listening devices; the head agent of the State Security in the hotel is manager of the hotel;
 - b. Hotel Balkan-Tourist, occupying a 3-story building with 50-60 rooms, in Plovdiv;
 - c. The Balkan-Tourist hotel at Khisar Momina Banya (N 42-30, E 24-44), near Plovdiv;
 - d. The Balkan-Tourist hotel at Burgas, occupying a 3-story building with 30-40 rooms, near the central railroad station;
 - e. The Musala hotel with 400 rooms, in Varna (now Stalin);
 - f. The Balkan-Tourist hotel with 50 rooms, in Varna;
 - g. Two hotels built in 1950-1951 on the seashore at Sveti Konstantin Monastir (N 43-13, E 28-00), approximately 10 kilometers from Varna; one has about 100 rooms, the other, 150 rooms;
 - h. Hotel Balkan-Tourist at Ruse, with 25 rooms;
 - i. Hotel Balkan-Tourist at Turnovo, with 30 rooms;

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- j. Hotel Balkan-Tourist at Pleven, with 25 rooms; and
 - k. Hotel Balkan-Tourist at Kyustendil, with 30 rooms.
2. In each of the above mentioned cities there are one or two Balkan-Tourist restaurants which are considered to be the best.
 3. Rooms are very difficult to obtain both at Balkan-Tourist and Municipal hotels. Bribes do not help. When a room or a bed is available, it is obtained without difficulties. All the hotels with the exception of Hotel Bulgaria are open to everybody. Admittance to the latter is limited to well-dressed people who, it is assumed, can pay the expensive charges. A room in one of the Balkan-Tourist hotels costs double the price of one at another hotel.
 4. Accommodation in a hotel requires the presentation of a Lichen Pasport and no substitute may be used. This is very strictly observed and even employees of a hotel are not allowed to spend the night there if they are not in possession of their identity card. A person is allowed to stay in a hotel in accordance with the period mentioned on his registration of residence at the police. Police checks in hotels are very frequent.
 5. Soviets visiting Sofia stay either at the Bulgaria or Slavyanska Besiyeda hotels. Usually their visit does not last more than a few days. An exception to this rule are two Soviets who have been living permanently at the Bulgaria Hotel for some years; they are managers of the former German enterprises now owned by the Soviets.
 6. Soviets staying at the Bulgaria Hotel have their meals at the Soviet Club, though there is a luxurious restaurant in the hotel. The Soviet Club, which occupies a 1-story building at the corner of Dobrudzha and Slavyanska streets, has two separate restaurants, one on the ground floor for Bulgarians, and one on the first floor for Soviets only.

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